

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3067

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PERP, SY, LE, IS, US
SUBJ: LATTAKIA CONFERENCE: LEBANESE ARMY TO MOVE SOUTH

REF: JERUSALEM 1529

1. SUMMARY: PAKRADOUNI SAYS PRESIDENTS SARKIS AND ASSAD DECIDED AT LATTAKIA THAT, FOLLOWING TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON, SYRIAN ARMY WOULD MOVE DOWN TO THE LITANI AND LEBANESE ARMY WOULD DEPLOY 3000 TROOPS INTO UNIFIL AREA IN TWO STAGES. PRINCIPAL UNRESOLVED PROBLEM IS DISPOSITION OF MAJOR SA'AD HADDAD AND HIS CHRISTIAN LEBANESE ARMY ALONG THE BORDER. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF MET WITH PHALANGE PARTY POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER KARIM PAKRADOUNI JUNE 2. PAKRADOUNI HAD MET WITH FONMIN BOUTROS JUNE 1 AFTER LATTER'S RETURN FROM PRESIDENT SARKIS' CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 03067 030952Z

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD IN LATTAKIA. PAKRADOUNI SAID BOUTROS TOLD HIM THAT EVEN HE WAS NOT FULLY BRIEFED YET ON VISIT, SINCE SARKIS AND ASSAD HAD HAD TWO LONG TETE-A-TETE SESSIONS. THERE HAD BEEN, HOWEVER, A GENERAL SESSION WITH THE FULL DELEGATIONS FROM BOTH SIDES, AT WHICH BROAD RANGE OF ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED.

3. SYRIAN ARMY TO THE LITANI. ASSAD HAD CONFIRMED SYRIAN DECISION TO DEPLOY SYRIAN ARMY IN LEBANON DOWN TO THE LITANI AFTER JUNE 13, PROVIDED ISRAELIS TOTALLY WITHDREW FROM LEBANON AS PROMISED. PALESTINIAN FREE MOVEMENT ZONE NORTH OF THE LITANI WOULD BE ELIMINATED. FURTHERMORE, SYRIANS WILL EXERT PRESSURE ON PALESTINIANS TO BEHAVE IN UNIFIL ZONE.

4. LEBANESE ARMY TO THE SOUTH. PAKRADOUNI SAID THE TWO PRESIDENTS HAD AGREED THAT AFTER THE ADF HAD MOVED TO THE LITANI, THE LEBANESE ARMY WOULD THEN MOVE INTO THE UNIFIL AREA. A FIRST CONTINGENT OF 1500 TROOPS WOULD MOVE IN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ADF MOVED SOUTH, FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER 1500 IN A SECOND STATE, FOR A TOTAL OF 3000. LEBANESE ARMY GENERAY KHOURY, PAKRADOUNI SAID, IS READY, WILLING AND ABLE. QUESTIONS OF COORDINATION WITH UNIFIL WILL OF COURSE HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT.

5. HADDAD PROBLEM. ASSUMING ISRAELIS DO IN FACT WITHDRAW COMPLETELY, PRINCIPAL PROBLEM CONFRONTING GOL IS WHAT TO DO ABOUT HADDAD AND HIS CHRISTIAN ARMY IN THE SOUTH. PAKRADOUNI SAID THAT ASSAD CLEARLY GAVE SARKIS AND GOL COMPLETELY FREE HAND TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM. GOL CABINET, IN NAME, BUT SARKIS, HOSS AND BOUTROS IN FACT, WILL HAVE TO FIND SOLUTION, WHICH NOT YET SERIOUSLY DISCUSSED. POSSIBLE IDEAS, IN PAKRADOUNI'S VIEW, ARE TO SEND HADDAD OFF TO BE A MILITARY ATTACHE SOMEWHERE, OR ABROAD FOR TRAINING.

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 03067 030952Z

6. PALESTINIAN-LEBANESE RELATIONS. PAKRADOUNI UNDERSTOOD THAT QUESTION OF FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATUS IN LEBANON WAS ALSO DISCUSSED AT LATTAKIA. BOUTROS, HOWEVER, WAS NOT BRIEFED ON QUESTION. IT APPEARED THAT THIS ISSUE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PRIMARILY IN PURVIEW OF PRIME MINISTER HOSS AND THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF. ARAFAT DID NOT (AS ORIGINALLY RUMORED IN BEIRUT PRESS) GO TO LATTAKIA.

7. COMMENT. (A) THE ASSAD-SARKIS SUMMIT MAY REPEAT MAY MARK THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PERIOD OF SYRIAN-LEBANESE COOPERATION IN RESTORING LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY NOT ONLY SOUTH OF THE LITANI, BUT ALSO IN THE AREA BETWEEN THE ZAHRANI AND THE LITANI. THIS GOAL, HOWEVER, WILL NOT BE EASY TO ACHIEVE. EVEN IF ARAFAT IS WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH UNIFIL AND THE SYRIANS, THERE ARE CERTAINLY SOME PALESTINIAN GROUPS THAT WILL STRONGLY RESIST ANDY ATTEMPT TO RESTRICT THEIR FREEDOM OF ACTION.

(B) IN A SEPARATE PRESS STATEMENT ON JUNE 2, PAKRADOUNI PREDICTED THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL ENTER SOUTH LEBANON "BEFORE THE END OF AUGUST" PROVIDED THAT (1) THE ISRAELIS

WITHDRAW COMPLETELY AND ON SCHEDULE AND (2) THAT THE PALESTINIANS STOP THEIR "OPERATIONS AND INFILTRATIONS" IN THE REGION. IN A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ON JUNE 2, FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTER BOUTROS SAID THAT A SERIES OF MEETINGS WILL BE NEEDED INVOLVING THE LEBANESE ARMY, THE ADF, AND THE SYRIAN ARMY, LKFD "OTHER PARTIES" BEFORE A FEASIBLE PROGRAM CAN BE WORKED OUT. THERE ARE NO SIGNS THAT THE GOL INTENDS TO SEND ANY UNITS SOUTH BEFORE JUNE 13.

(C) PAKRADOUNI'S COMMENTS INDICATE THAT ASSAD LEFT THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO DEAL WITH MAJOR HADDAD SQUARELY IN SARKIS'S LAP. WE NOTE FROM JERUSALEM 1516 AND REFTEL THAT SIILASVUO IS PLANNING TO VISIT BEIRUT ON JUNE 5 TO TRY TO GET SOME DECISIONS FROM GOL RE DEALING WITH HADDAD. IF SARKIS RUNS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 03067 030952Z

TRUE TO FORM, WE SUSPECT HE WILL TRY TO AVOID MAKING ANY HARD DECISIONS ON THIS PROBLEM AND LEAVE IT UP TO UNNY, SIILASVUO AND UNIFIL COMMANDERS TO WORK OUT THE BEST ARRANGEMENTS THEY CAN WITH HADDAD, CHIDIAC AND THE ISRAELIS BETWEEN NOW AND JUNE 13.

(D) BEIRUT PRESS REPORTS THAT GOL WILL UNDERTAKE INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS TO ASSURE THAT THERE IS NO "EXTERNAL" OPPOSITION TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF ADF TROOPS TO THE LITANI. THE GOL HAS NOT YET CONTACTED THIS EMBASSY ON THIS SUBJECT.
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